

# Stalham High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121155
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	358945
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ahson Mohammed

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	484
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Toni Jeary
<b>Headteacher</b>	Melinda Derry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2010
<b>School address</b>	Brumstead Road Stalham, Norwich NR12 9DG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 19 teachers in 21 lessons, two tutorial groups and an assembly; they also took part in a joint learning walk with the headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and other staff, groups of students, and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of students' progress, performance data, students' work, whole-school and subject development plans, numerous policies, school documents and case studies. Completed questionnaires from 109 students, 32 staff and 46 parents and carers were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent of the improvements predicted by the school in attainment and progress for the current Year 11 and in future years.
- The extent to which leaders, at all levels, have improved the provision and raised standards across all years, especially in English and mathematics.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in promoting literacy across the curriculum and analysing the impact.
- How well assessment is used to promote the progress that students make.
- The extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of students of all abilities.

## Information about the school

Stalham High is a smaller than average comprehensive school serving the rural community of Stalham. It was subject to a notice to improve in its last inspection. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all of the school population is of White British origin. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/ or disabilities is well below average. The school holds the Sportsmark award and specialist humanities status. It has also recently been awarded the International Schools Award (foundation level).

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Stalham High is transforming and improving at a brisk pace. The school is benefiting from purposeful and focused leadership and management established by the headteacher and restructured leadership team. As one parent commented, 'The head teacher has made a huge difference. I feel that the school is really turning around under her direction'.

The change in management has contributed to a much happier and welcoming environment. Another parent comments, 'Stalham has done wonders for my child's confidence and it is like having a new child.' The current leadership team has established a secure foundation for further improvements including the raised morale of staff and students. This has enabled parental involvement and also significantly improved students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school. The leadership team are implementing change at a rapid rate. Middle managers are becoming increasingly more accountable, though there are still inconsistencies. Many students speak enthusiastically about how the school has changed and how there is greater focus on behaviour and achievement. Students value the positive ethos of the school and they are confident that their concerns are addressed. This approach makes a major contribution to the good care and guidance provided for the students.

Overall attainment is broadly average but it is rising. This is because teaching and learning are improving and the curriculum better meets students' needs. Students are making at least satisfactory progress because teaching is now satisfactory with much that is good or better. However, there are variations in the performance of students because in some lessons work is not matched closely enough to their needs and as a result they do not achieve the highest grades possible. In some lessons feedback through marking is limited and students are not always clear about what they need to do to improve. However, the school does have some exemplary practice in these areas on which to build.

The school's specialism is the means adopted for their strong approach to literacy development and this is taken on by most subjects. Staff display high levels of commitment towards every student, reflecting the school's caring and inclusive ethos.

Students in the current Years 10 and 11 are making satisfactory or better progress. This is an improvement after a previous trend of underachievement in national examinations. Improved teaching and more focused use of monitoring data has contributed to a steady improvement across many areas of the school. Many students are on track to meet or exceed their targets. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving rapidly. The school is starting to ensure consistency and rigour in the quality of teaching and in checking that lessons meet the needs of all students. There is still further scope for

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improvement in the teaching of mathematics and numeracy across the curriculum. The school has been supported in this by the local authority, leading to steady progress. Most students know their targets and are clear about what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory; staff monitor its effectiveness and ensure that areas of learning are responsive and planned to meet the needs of all students but needs time to embed.

The school is already thriving on the change in ethos. 'Small school, big ambitions' is the school's motto; this is the foundation for the school's clear agenda for improvement, fuelled with a good team spirit, it has sound capacity to improve further.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress by:
  - systematically tracking and monitoring students likely to miss their targets, making up the shortfall in all subjects using the good practice emerging and evident in some areas of learning
  - ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation of attainment is consistently carried out by all subject leaders and remedial actions are carried out within specified timescales.
- Ensuring that all teaching is good or better by:
  - using a variety of assessment techniques to accelerate learning and progress
  - regular formal assessment of students work and giving guidance on how to improve
  - raising aspirations further, by ensuring that learning tasks in lessons are appropriately challenging for all students
  - sharing the good practice in teaching and learning that exists in some areas across all departments
  - improving numeracy skills development across the curriculum

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Previously, students joined the school with average attainment, but this is declining. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 2010, students' attainment was below average in many key areas. This includes the percentage of students achieving five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics. However, the percentage of the current Year 11, students who are on track to gain a grade C or above in English and mathematics indicates secure improvements in these subjects and represents satisfactory progress. Inspectors' own observations showed progress in lessons to be mostly good and in some lessons outstanding. The school's data shows a clearly improving trend of attainment in all subjects which is set to rise again in the coming year. However, there are still some gaps in performance, for example in the achievement of girls in mathematics compared with that of boys and there is still some disparity in the performance of certain subjects, notably in mathematics. Work is already underway to address these concerns.

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The school is now setting itself appropriate challenging targets by comparing its performance against schools nationally. School data shows most of the current Year 10 and 11 students are meeting or exceeding these targets, but this has yet to be validated by suitable success in the 2011 examinations.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities have a tailored curriculum to meet their needs and make the same level of progress as their peers; they talk positively about the support they receive.

The majority of students feel safe in school and confirmed that if they do raise concerns they are quickly and effectively addressed. 'H2H' which is an acronym for 'Happy to Help' is a developing peer support programme, which they use to deal with concerns raised by students and staff. The promotion of e-safety and health education and other subject specific curriculum programmes encourage students to work safely. Many students take on positions of responsibility, including supporting younger students within their vertical tutor group, as sports leaders and through the influential and developing school and learning councils which have triggered many of the improvements evident around the school. The students have been involved in raising funds for several national charities and have held literacy festivals which have involved local residents. This is an indication of the good contribution that the students make to the school and wider community. The majority of students show commitment to adopting healthy lifestyles through participation in physical exercise in lessons as well as through the range of extra-curricular activities promoted by the school. Attendance has improved strongly and is now broadly average. Students acquire workplace and other skills that will be of value in the future satisfactorily.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In mathematics, science, English and vocational education there are some features of good and at times outstanding practice.

Teachers' knowledge of their subject is good. Lessons are taught in an encouraging and positive atmosphere. Teachers provide stimulating tasks and use questions effectively to challenge students' responses; students develop confidence, build on what they have previously learned and develop effective thinking skills. This contributes significantly to their eagerness to learn and the way they undertake tasks, with enthusiasm and assurance. Students say they learn best when lessons include regular opportunities for discussion and for working in small groups. Teachers' planning does not always match tasks closely to the individual needs of students and this hinders a more rapid rate of progress. Most lessons include provision and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but opportunities to challenge more able students are occasionally missed. There are examples of good and effective marking where students' progress has benefited and their work improved. This good practice, however, is not consistent across the school.

There are many positive examples of the school's good care, guidance and support for individuals both in their personal well-being and academic development. Transition arrangements from primary school and across key stages are robust and aspirations are being raised. The vertical tutor group system develops positive relationships between

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students of different ages, and between teachers and students. This adds to students feeling well cared for and safe, especially those who are new to the school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision of improvement across the school and how to get there. An effective leadership team with high expectations has been built. The Governing body and the school are driving improvements. For example, the school's strong focus on literacy contributed to secure improvements being made. Careful tracking of students' progress has enabled staff to pinpoint underachievement and take prompt action. However, there are some inconsistencies in the use of assessment to increase the level of challenge. Gaps in performance of different groups of students are closing, indicating that equality of opportunity is seen as a priority.

There is evidence to support that teachers have raised the quality of teaching, but there is also recognition that all lessons need to be good or better to accelerate progress and raise standards further. Senior leadership is supporting subject leaders to bring about changes and this is already having an impact in some areas. School self evaluation is accurate and honest.

There is regular exchange of information via the use of the school website and parental bulletins. The school works hard to involve parents but finds it difficult to engage parents and carers fully in the wider aspects of its work. Procedures for the safeguarding of students are effective and meet statutory requirements. The school is a cohesive and harmonious community, but does not do enough to foster a greater awareness of multicultural Britain. Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. They are now better informed and focused on addressing the academic needs of the students.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who completed questionnaires were generally positive about the school and their children's education, although the percentage of returns was much lower than usually found for a school of this size. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about the behaviour of pupils. Inspectors followed up these concerns: they judged that the school has effective policies and practices in place to ensure the needs of students are identified and addressed appropriately.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stalham High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 486 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	18	30	54	15	27	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	14	25	35	63	3	5	4	7
My school informs me about my child's progress	10	18	32	57	11	20	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	21	29	52	15	27	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	11	25	45	18	32	4	7
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	25	15	27	22	39	4	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	20	27	48	10	18	5	9
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	21	28	50	8	14	3	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	20	26	46	12	21	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	16	23	41	11	20	11	20
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	23	20	36	12	21	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	12	21	26	46	10	18	5	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	21	25	45	13	23	5	9

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



23 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Stalham High School Norwich NR12 9DG**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and the team of inspectors that visited your school. Your views were very helpful and we enjoyed our discussions with those of you we spoke to in lessons, in meetings and around the school.

We found that your school is a satisfactory and improving school. Attainment is rising; you are making satisfactory and often good progress in your lessons. Your school is making considerable efforts so that you can make good progress in all your learning. You are well supported by staff that care for your well-being. You are beginning to take pride in your school and are involved in the changes taking place. You show a positive approach to your work and attendance has improved. You clearly enjoy the range of learning opportunities offered to you within and outside of the school day and many of you take advantage of these.

The leadership team of your school is determined to provide the best for every one of you. To help improve your school further, we have asked your headteacher, the governors and the staff to raise your achievement in all subjects by:

- making sure that you experience good teaching consistently across all areas
- ensuring that teachers plan carefully so that you all make the greatest possible progress
- monitoring how you are doing regularly so that support can be provided when required

You can help by ensuring that you do not settle for anything other than your best and you follow up comments and suggestions that your teachers make to help you to improve your work. I wish you all success in the future, hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Stalham and go on to taking an active part in making the improvements in your school.

Yours sincerely

Ahson Mohammed

Lead inspector

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